



Commission on Forensic Science Standards and Certifications Advisory Committee (SAC)

Minutes

August 13th, 2019

9:00 AM

200 S. Adams Street, Wilmington DE

Committee Members Present:

Jamie Armstrong, CODIS Administrator, DFS

Johna Esposito, Quality Assurance Manager, DFS

Major Daniel K. Meadows, Delaware State Police, Special Operations

Ashley Wang, Laboratory Manager I in FCU, DFS

Julia Vekasy, Chief Forensic Investigator, DFS – call in from DFS - South

Committee Members Absent:

Lynda Kopishke, Retired Forensic Nurse with ODS

Minutes:

1. Welcome, Call to Order – Johna Esposito
2. Welcome back Julia!
3. Review and Approval of Minutes from May 22nd, 2019.
 - a. JA moves to accept, second by DM. All in favor.
4. Follow Up from Last Meeting re. Forensics at Other State Organizations
 - a. Major Meadows – table of FSPs in the state
 - i. Submits a report to subcommittee.
 - ii. Ever evolving/changing. Will need to continually reevaluate what law enforcement is doing regarding forensic contributions.
 - iii. Representing what DSP does, but haven't really reached out to smaller law enforcement agencies in the state, although think that this covers most of what is done.
 - iv. Overview of what is in the state. No specifics on numbers or space.
 - b. Ashley – information from VA, PA, Jersey
 - i. VA was easy because they have a good system with a central, northern, eastern, and western labs.
 1. Variety of services.
 2. Alcoholic beverage testing – test content of beverages
 3. Listed out the services and what they were, if not self-explanatory.

4. Central lab offers all of services and then satellite labs offer more limited services.
5. Besides the state system, they really only have one other lab in Prince William County doing Crime Scene and Latent Prints.
6. Included a link at the top to show that their central lab is getting an upgrade. Might be good to keep track of their building process to learn from it.
7. Their system is separate from law enforcement, similar to how DFS is separate from law enforcement.
8. Noted that the VA office does some degree of fire debris analysis, some of which is done at state fire marshal here.

ii. Jersey

1. Theirs is under state police. Located within the state police (different from VA)
2. Central, southern, eastern, and northern lab. Separate duties based on need.
3. Not as inclusive in their satellite labs . . . most of it is done in the central lab.
4. They have a separate facility just for DNA, located within the same group. It is right next to the central lab, but its own building.
5. Assuming that things that aren't covered here must be covered by state police.
6. Do have a regional computer forensics lab that does all computer forensic analysis. It is located within the central lab, but a different name.
7. A few counties also have their own labs, but they are limited services.

iii. Pennsylvania

1. PA state police, similar to NJ.
2. Regional and central labs. More regional labs (because bigger state).
3. Separate DNA building (trailers) located in same place as central lab.
4. Also have some separate labs (i.e. Philly).

iv. Difficult to compare DE to other states that are larger.

1. Multiple locations can help if you keep your workforce mobile such that they can be moved to other locations as needed. Mostly this happens with new employees/trainees who get trained centrally and then are assigned to a location.
2. Are we really big enough to need satellite labs or would having a central lab take care of it?

v. Ashley notes that the majority of evidence in FCU comes from Sussex. It is a myth that "most of the need is in Wilmington." We could gather stats to show where the needs are.

vi. Fire Marshal offices are now working together more to coordinate and prioritize evidence.

c. Johna – information from RI

i. See hand out.

d. Jamie – pros/cons list

- i. Pros – all analysts at one site, more convenient for customers. Fewer CoC issues (evidence stays on site). The prestige of one state of the art building with all services in one space. Could be more efficient. Accreditation for all. Same perks/accommodations for all.
 - ii. Cons – could be difficult to get some disciplines accredited. Expensive to create. Finding a location to building or refurbish. Personnel issues (people are resistant to change, job titles may change). Environmental impact of building.
- 5. Discuss initial report to the commission on FSP Consolidation
 - a. Determine a layout for the report
 - i. This is a big picture view. Won't want to move onto "chapter 2" (of getting into the details of space needs, costs, personnel needs, etc. of one consolidated space) until after the commission has determined that consolidation is the way to go and started moving forward on that. The next step would involve restructuring of not only DFS but also the police agencies, which would be a huge undertaking. The more in-depth of space needs may also be something that the other committee might be in charge of.
 - ii. What to include
 - 1. List of FSPs in DE currently, along with possible recommendations for expansion and/or restructuring of services.
 - a. There could be a discussion of expansion of services. The sheet from DM does highlight some of the work that is outsourced.
 - b. May want to change up the infrastructure, as far as how things are done. For example, DSPCL does alcohol testing but so does the DFS. Go Forensic Services by Forensic Service and ask if it is done the best it an.
 - c. No odontology or anthropology within the state. Kat Pope was the go-to for anthropology, but now she is gone. Dr. Alexander out of PA is the go-to for odontology. UNT (University of North Texas) will be the go-to for anthropology.
 - i. Julia thinks that we do have enough anthropology cases (1-2 cases every few weeks where an officer will send pictures of bones, for example, to evaluate) to need one in the state.
 - ii. Odontology isn't often needed for ID purposes. A lot of times, the DFS personnel can look at an Xray and make a comparison.
 - iii. Overall, more need for anthropologist. Could, if there are plenty of FIs, then have the anthropologist also work as an FI, but not if the FIs need to be in the field all the time because there aren't enough FIs to cover the duties.
 - d. Document analysis – currently reach out to bureau.
 - 2. Space needs. – how much at the main building and how much at potential separate units (i.e. evidence maybe stays stored at county or troop level?) – beyond our initial report.
 - a. May want to recommend a large plot of land where you can start small and then build out to eventually create the one campus with all FSPs you need.
 - b. There are some advantages to having multiple buildings in one campus (i.e. each unit can keep the temperature/humidity set the way their unit requires).

- c. Space needs go way beyond the actual square footage. This would be something determined during architectural review, as far as one building with separate spaces that fit each units need or multiple buildings on one campus.
- 3. Existing and recommended certifications and accreditations. – RI, VA, MD, and PA are ISO 17025 accredited (in all disciplines as listed in the notes from each state). In DE, the DFS labs are the only ones with ISO 17025 accreditation, but other labs have CALEA and/or some individual/unique certifications/accreditations. 17025 would govern the management system of the campus/building but individual units may need other accreditations.
- 4. What other states are doing.
 - a. Right now we have four pages of info from other states, would want to reorganize to 1-2 pages.
 - b. VAs central lab is good to compare to us in DE, given our size vs what they cover. Probably also good to look at PA's main facility. We would not need satellite labs.
- 5. What we recommend in the way of consolidation. – one campus/one building.
- 6. Show what each lab does . . . focus on DFS as the comparison.
- 7. Pros and Cons of consolidation. – cutting down on overall turnaround time, units can work together more (i.e. heroin bags that get fingerprinted and then go to FCU for drug testing or evidence that goes to DNA after fingerprinting or trace evidence (i.e. hair) being found during FCU testing). More efficient. Less driving around.
- iii. What information do we still need to gather? Do we want to include all of it in the initial report or present only some of it in the initial report?
- iv. Any ideas for pictures/tables/graphics
 - 1. Comparing DFS services to other surrounding state's central office services
 - 2. State of DE FSP graphic
- b. Assign the various sections
 - i. Danny – continue working on the FSP graphic
 - ii. Ashley – other states are doing
 - iii. Jamie – pros and cons
 - iv. Johna – pull it together
- c. Goal date for completion and presentation to Commission
 - i. Next commission meeting is September 9th
- 6. Potentially visiting the other organizations and/or having someone come speak to us.
 - a. Not at this time. May be good at "Chapter 2."
- 7. Next Meeting Day/Time
 - a. Immediately following the September 9th meeting.
- 8. Adjourn 10:11 Danny motions, Ashley seconds.